



Port **DOUGLAS**

WATERFRONT SOUTH PRECINCT

CONSULTATION REPORT

DOUGLAS SHIRE COUNCIL
17 AUGUST 2018

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One. INTRODUCTION

The Port Douglas Waterfront South Precinct has been initiated by Douglas Shire Council in response to a number of dynamic factors which are currently influencing the next evolution of Port Douglas as tourist destination.

There is a need to ensure that Port Douglas remains competitive as a domestic and internationally significant holiday destination and liveable community. As a gateway to the Great Barrier Reef and Tropical Queensland it must remain competitive and contemporary as a tourist and visitor destination.

It is incumbent upon Douglas Shire Council to ensure investment in tourism and related infrastructure is maintained and that new development aligns with the strategic planning objectives in terms of quality of development and economic outcomes.

Douglas Shire Council has engaged AECOM Australia Pty Ltd (AECOM) to prepare a concept master plan for the Port Douglas Waterfront South Precinct. The objectives for the project have been to:



Creation of a new precinct which can enhance the gateway for visitors to Port Douglas to access the Great Barrier Reef



Provide options for flexible growth and a staged development of the precinct



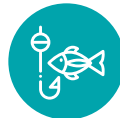
Sustainable outcomes both green infrastructure and landscape design that reflects the tropical waterfront setting of the site



Effective management of commercial and recreational vessels



Seek opportunities for commercial and private sector involvement with the project



Continued support for commercial fishing and tourist fleet by offering a 'hub or gateway' for Port Douglas



Two.

SUPPORTING THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

PROJECT CONTEXT

History

Port Douglas has a long and winding maritime history, first beginning as a trading port in 1877 shipping gold found in the Hodgkinson River. Success of the port ebbed and flowed over the decades with various trade pursuits, at one time surpassed Cairns as a major exporting port for Queensland. The last commercial export left Port Douglas in the 1950's, when sugar cane began traveling by road to Cairns for shipping¹.

In the 1970's tourism began to thrive in Port Douglas, further growing in the early 1980's with Quicksilver tours to the Outer Barrier Reef. This tourism spike was further fuelled in 1984 with the opening of Cairns International Airport and new resort developments, including the Sheraton Mirage Resort.

Today, Port Douglas is popular launching pad for Queensland's ecological tourism, with access to some of Queensland's most iconic sites, including the Great Barrier Reef, the Daintree Rainforest and Mossman Gorge.

Visitation

The Douglas Region attracts approximately 668,000 visitors annually, staying an average of 6 nights per trip. The average accommodation spend per night is \$227, and ancillary spending of \$208 per night. International visitors are predominantly from the United Kingdom, United States of America and New Zealand².

Tourist Economy

The tourism industry is a key economic contributor to the Douglas Region, with approximately \$489m a year being spent by visitors to the region. Approximately 200 tourism businesses employ people in the region, with an additional 114 non-employing tourism business³. Accommodation constitutes approximately 20% of the employment industry in Port Douglas, with cafes and restaurants, sightseeing businesses and pubs and bars constituting a further 17%.



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BY VISITORS



200
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EMPLOY PEOPLE
IN THE REGION



20%
OF THE EMPLOYMENT
INDUSTRY IS
CONSTITUTED FROM
ACCOMMODATION

Three. KEY ISSUES

As part of the early concept development consultation has been undertaken with a number of relevant stakeholders including local business and State Government Agencies. The issues raised have been used to develop the initial concept master plan which is now being presented for public consultation. The general findings from those discussions have been grouped into the following themes:

- Environment & Public Realm
- Employment & Tourism
- Operations & Logistics



ENVIRONMENT & PUBLIC REALM

- Strong desire to maintain the outlook and ambience of the precinct in terms of the aspect to water and quiet and tranquillity of the location
- Opportunity to create a new destination with Port Douglas offering new dining and marina experiences
- Desirable to enhance a 'gateway' experience for visitors to Port Douglas through good quality architecture and public realm
- Clearing existing marine plants (Mangroves) and fish habitat will require further assessment and environmental offsets
- Assessment of mapped coastal management district issues and risk needs consideration as part of the detailed design
- Design and management of car parking should avoid excessive open hardstanding



EMPLOYMENT & TOURISM

- Currently a fleet of 30 plus commercial vessels operating from Port Douglas. These provide a range of fishing and tourist service and employ a large number of people locally. The large tour boat groups will directly employ 100 plus staff each
- Tourist boat trips include a combination of local Port Douglas visitors and day trips from Cairns. During peak seasons day trip passenger numbers will exceed 2500 per day across the entire fleet
- A range of local businesses provide daily services to the commercial tourist boat industry. This includes catering and similar guest services.
- There are approximately 20 fishing vessels operating in the Cairns / Cook Town region with 7/8 operating from Port Douglas. Approximately 30 to 40 tonnes of catch per boat, with boats out to sea for 5 days at time.
- 'Direct from trawler' sales are growing and very popular with tourists and residents
- Opportunity to establish a permanent 'local catch' sales cooperative combined with local processing of fish which currently takes place in Cairns. Local catch is promoted by local restaurants and is a popular menu feature
- Cruise ships are also making day visits to Port Douglas. Up to 24 visits are occurring each year with ships

holding 3000 passengers plus. Ships are held on anchor with passengers transferred via tender.

- It is suggested that the future re-development of the Crystalbrook Super Yacht Marina may favour white boats over commercial vessels and it is likely that commercial berths may be lost with no alternative locations. This may result in a reduction of commercial vessel / tourism opportunities in Port Douglas
- The Yacht club is a popular community and visitor facility and attractions. The club provides for public dining and functions and is regularly booked out during peak season.
- The yacht club hosts a number of regattas and events throughout the year and the weekly "WAGS" offer sailing experiences for the general public



OPERATIONS & LOGISTICS

- The Port Douglas slip way is an important local marine industry. Most vessels need to be taken out of the water and de-fouled every 12/24 months. In addition the existing slipway provides a range of related services including engine repairs, sails maintenance, rigging and similar industries
- Typically all marine based activities and operations require varying levels of land based storage for related equipment. This would also include waste storage and removal

- This in addition to an area of vehicle accessible hard stand of wharf directly accessible to the marina. This for services, deliveries, trades, fuel, emergency vehicles to be able access the berth
- Typical boat tours operate based on an 8.30/9.30am departure with a 4.30pm return and 5pm departure for any coach transfers
- Car parking within the existing Marina is very busy. During peak periods the Crystalbrook Super Yacht Marina car park can be full with street parking along Wharf street also highly utilised
- Ticketing is required for many of the tourist boats. This includes a physical paper ticket and passenger register. Larger operators will require a shop front and office space to support operations / check in
- The tide can run very quickly within Dickson Inlet, reported at between 4 to 6 knots. This has caused issue for large vessels manoeuvring into the Crystalbrook Marina. This is also an issue for recreational boats using the public boat ramp

HAS ANYTHING BEEN MISSED?

- We want to know your experiences of the Port Douglas, are you are regular user of local boating facilities or a commercial tour operator?
- Are there elements we have missed and need to be included in the master plan?
- Do you see a business opportunity and would like to be part of the future Port Douglas Waterfront South Precinct?



SITE IMAGERY

Four.

CONCEPT MASTER PLAN

A number of design options have been prepared for the waterfront south precinct. This includes relocation of the existing Port Douglas boat ramp. However the outcomes failed to capture the unique opportunity of this important waterfront location and would have resulted in a poor quality public realm with limited value add opportunities.

The concept master plan seeks to provide a range of potential land use and design outcomes but with a very strong focus on creating a new destination and tourist facility. Key elements of the master plan include:

- Centralised tourist and retail hub offering retail, food and beverage and tourism based services supported by a 'market square'
- Shared bus and taxi drop off zone combined with short term parking
- Establishment of quayside area to provide servicing to the Closehaven Marina and Fisherman's Wharf. Including waterfront business units
- Bus layover area with new pedestrian access linking to the precinct
- Establishment of an expanded marine industry precinct combined with a relocated recreational boat ramp and parking.

CONCEPT MASTER PLAN



- 1 Marine Industry Precinct
- 2 Public boat ramp, pontoon and trailer parking
- 3 100 long term public car parking spaces
- 4 Future Marine Industry
- 5 Park
- 6 Relocated boat yard with waterfront access and car park
- 7 Quayside area provide loading and service zone for Closehaven Marina and Fisherman's wharf. Combined with small retail / commercial units.
- 8 Shared bus and taxi drop off zone combined with short term parking
- 9 Establishment of quayside area to provide servicing to the Closehaven Marina and Fisherman's Wharf. Option to provide business units / administration buildings
- 10 Bus layover area with new pedestrian access linking to the precinct

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KEY FEATURES OF THE MASTER PLAN



Port Douglas Waterfront South Precinct

The master plan includes the creation of a vibrant waterfront precinct to act as a tourism hub for visitors embarking on journeys to the Great Barrier Reef. As a working marina it would include:

- Dedicated retail and tour operator building offering a breakout place to gather prior to a trip
- Wharf area and boat yard to provide logistics and services to the existing marina, fisherman's wharf and yacht club
- Flexible business units which could be as small offices, start up units or local produce or fisherman catch sales
- Short term car parking and visitor drop off areas to service the entire precinct including the yacht club
- Open and high quality pedestrian environment complemented by a tropical landscape setting



MARINA



LANEWAY



SHADED CARPARK



New car parking and coach layover areas

In order to limit car parking on an important waterfront site long term parking is provided away from the main precinct hub. This would provide parking for day trip visitors and include a coach lay over area.

- New off street parking to service the day trip and visitor market
- Dedicated bus layover area offering potential of shared use with the sports oval
- Future potential to stage and expand the marine industry precinct



PUBLIC REALM



MARINA JETTY



BOAT RAMP



Marine Industry

By expanding the role and function of the existing fuel depot, a marine industry precinct can be established to support the maritime industry in Port Douglas. A re-located boat ramp would also relieve pressure on the existing park by Macrossan Street and provide a new dedicated recreational boating facility.

- New boat ramp, trailing parking and facilities including amenities block and wash down area
- Expansion of the existing marine industry precinct to provide boat repair and maintenance services

Five. YOUR FEEDBACK

We hope that you share our enthusiasm for the creation of Port Douglas Waterfront South Precinct. However the future success of the precinct is linked to the active involvement of the local community, business and tours operators.

We want your feedback on the master plan to ensure that the future project can be a success.

This is part of Council's commitment to providing lifestyle and economy boosting projects that are influenced and owned by the Douglas Shire community.

Over the next month there will be a series of consultation event throughout the Douglas Shire area. Council will be staffing displays at various locations including the Saturday Markets in Mossman and Sunday Markets in Port Douglas.

Venues, dates and times will be published on Council's website and Facebook page.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Commencement of public consultation on the concept master plan will start on the **20th of August 2018** with the deadline for feedback on the **30th of September 2018**.

Please send your feedback by either:

1. Emailing enquiries@douglas.qld.gov.au with Waterfront South Precinct Concept Plan in the subject line or;
2. Mailing written comments to PO Box 723, Mossman Qld 4873.



Port DOUGLAS

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